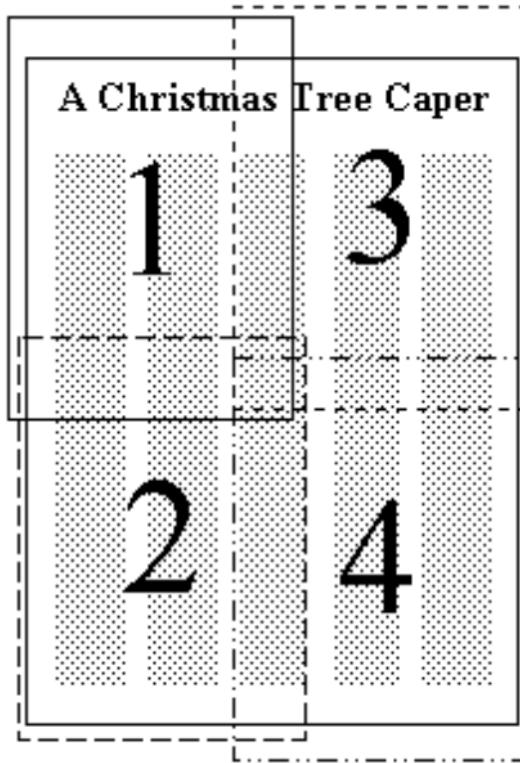


NOTE: This newspaper appearance was divided and enlarged to fill 8 ½" x 11" pages, roughly in the manner shown below.



open the dam, and you're ready to cast."

I flipped out my lure let it sink and began slowly reeling in. I got a strike about 10 yards out and when I played the fish close to the dock, Jerry was ready with the net.

PLEASANT SMILE

The girl stood beside me as I put the fish on a stringer together with the other six I'd caught.

Her smile was quite pleasant. "Do you know what kind of fish those are?"

"Small mouth Bass," I said, returning her smile. "Most people have difficulty in telling them from the largemouth, but one sure method is to count the rows of scales on the gill covers. A small mouth has sixteen."

"Seventeen," she said, still smiling. "I understand that the bass season doesn't open until tomorrow."

"We don't have to worry about the game warden," Jerry said. "He's not anywhere near here. If he were, everybody would have passed the word around. We're like that up here."

"How charming," she said. "One big happy family."

"He hasn't arrested anybody but tourists in the last five years," Jerry said proudly.

She picked up the string of fish and held them at arm's length. "Nice catch," she said admiringly.

"By the way, you're under arrest for fishing out of season."

Jerry and I exchanged glances. "I'm an innocent bystander," he said.

She took a badge out of her pocket and showed it to me. "The department is quite aware of the arrangement you have up here. Therefore I've been specially deputized to put a stop to it."

I meditated for a moment. "This strikes me as being extremely sneaky," I said. "I've got a good mind to resist arrest."

And still she smiled. "Just follow my car," she said. "I'll take you directly to Judge Harker. I believe he's the local magistrate."

We followed her car to the village and pulled up in front of Judge Harker's home. He was sitting on the front porch reading the paper and smoking his pipe.

He put down the paper as we came up the steps. "Nice afternoon, Tom," he said.

the services of a lawyer?"

"He is a lawyer," Judge Harker said. "Also he's chairman of the committee that stocks the lake with bass each year. He might have the moral right to get in a few days fishing before the tourists swarm in." He rubbed his chin and looked at her. "By the way, who are you?"

She colored slightly. "I'm sorry, your honor. I'm Marian O'Brien. I'm a game warden."

"Specially deputized," I said. "How did the spray I got for your roses work, Uncle George?"

"Fine," he said. "But now I'm having trouble with my chrysanthemums."

"Your honor," Marian said tightly. "This is quite serious."

I nodded my head. "She's right. Chrysanthemums can be mighty delicate."

She took several deep breaths. "Shall we get on with the trial?"

Judge Harker looked at me and suppressed a grin.

"Court is now in session. How does the defendant plead?"

PAPERS TO PROVE IT

"Not guilty, Uncle George," I said. "I move that the case against me be dropped for lack of sufficient evidence."

Marian's voice rose alarmingly. "Lack of sufficient evidence!" She held up the string of bass. "What do you call these?" she demanded.

"Easy now," Judge Harker said to her, his eyes twinkling. "That's just a routine that every lawyer goes through in the hope that the judge may be feeble-minded. Motion denied."

I put my hand on Jerry's shoulder. "I have here a boy who's perfectly willing to commit perjury for me. He caught three of the fish."

"Not guilty," Jerry said. "Besides, I belong in juvenile court."

"By the way, Marian," I said. "How do we know that you're a game warden. I know you've got a badge, but—" I rubbed the lobe of my ear. "Don't you think her eyes are too close together, judge?"

"They are not," she said indignantly. "And I have papers to prove it. About being a game warden, I mean."

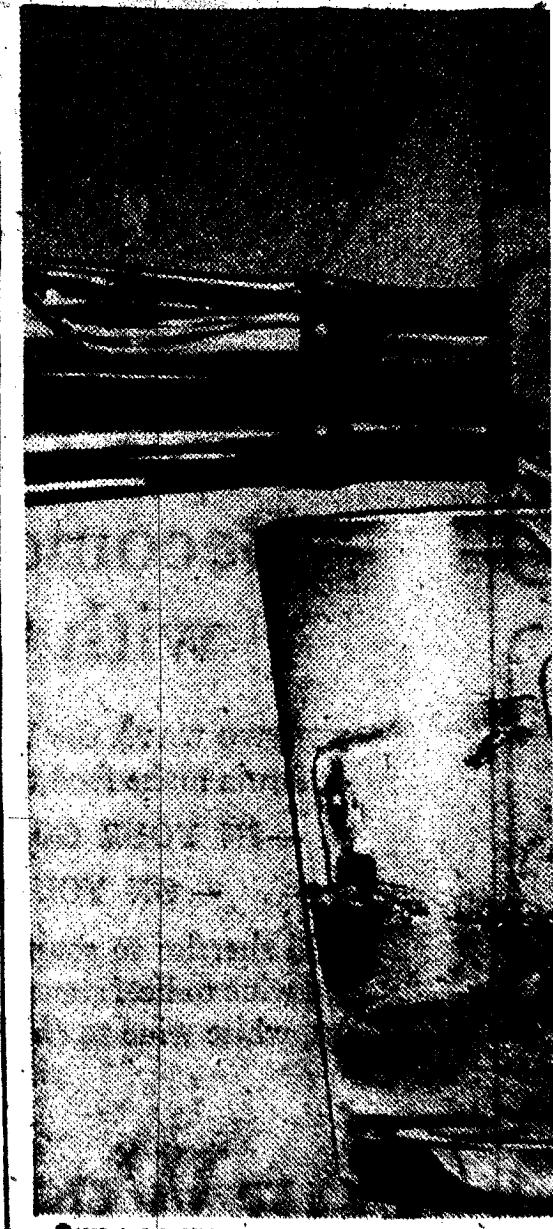
She searched through the pockets of her blue jeans and then slowly reddened. "They must be in my car," she said.

She was back in less than a



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minute. "Here they are," she said triumphantly.

The judge and I examined them carefully.

"So you're from Newton," I said. "Good. That's only a short drive for me."

I returned the papers to her. "Your honor," I said. "I change my plea. I plead guilty."

"Fifty dollars and costs," Judge Harker said. "That comes to sixty-seven fifty."

Jerry figured it out. "How come the costs are seventeen fifty?"

"Gravy, son," the judge said.

ANOTHER CHARGE

"I wish to bring up a point," I said. "Do I get to keep the fish?"

"No," Marian said emphatically, almost hugging them. "They belong to the state."

I smiled at her. "All right, then," I said. "Did you know it's against law to leave your car keys in the ignition when

you're not there: I noticed that you did."

Her eyes narrowed. "Just what are you up to now?"

"In the name of the law," I said impressively. "I arrest you."

"Ha" she said, her voice heavy with scorn. "What gives you the authority to arrest me?"

"The Constitution," I said. "In the absence of the proper law enforcement officials, a private citizen has the right to assume the authority to arrest if he witnesses the commission of a crime. Isn't that right, Uncle George?"

"I wouldn't be surprised," he said. "How do you plead? Guilty or not guilty?"

"Now just one darn minute," she almost shouted.

"Better plead guilty," I advised. "I'm sure the judge will go easy on you."

"This is ridiculous," she said in a strangled voice. "Absolutely, positively ridiculous!"

"Thirty days," Judge Harker said. "For contempt of court."

"If it please your honor," I said. "If you'll just suspend sen-

tence and place her in my custody, I'll see that she behaves in the future."

"All right, Tom," he said. "Sentence suspended under those conditions."

"Thank you, Uncle George," I said. "I'll keep an eagle eye on her every day and especially evenings."

Marian seemed about to burst. But evidently she decided it would be wiser to say no more. She turned on her heel and strode stiffly toward her car.

I followed her with the fish. "You forgot these," I said.

"Eat them," she said vehemently. "I don't want to see either them or you again."

But she did.

See more of me, I mean.

And at the end of 30 days, she didn't put up much of a protest when I took her before the judge for sentencing in the interrupted matter of the car keys.

He placed her in my custody for an indefinite term.

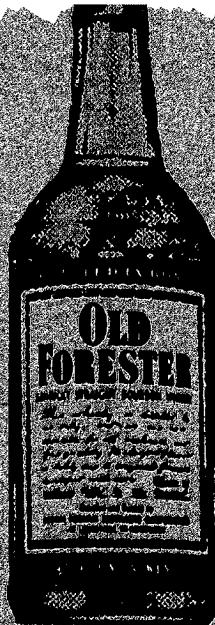
THE END



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